

# SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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Mural For Texas Post Office.

By VICTOR ARNAUTOFF.

*In a letter from the Treasury Department, recently received by the artist, Mr. Edward Rowan, Superintendent of Painting and Sculpture, wrote: "The cartoon gave us the opportunity to see how consummate a work of art you have created for the decoration. The drawing of the four women gathering cotton is as beautiful a passage as we have seen in many a moon."*

## Social Conflict and Art Variable and Constant Qualities Discussed

By JOHN HALEY

LEAVING CALIFORNIA in the midst of December floods, arriving in Germany during the Anschluss, thence to Italy for the well-staged fiction of brother love with Hitler, and returning to America on a ship loaded with political refugees, the dominant world theme seemed one of social upheaval. In New York one half the population appeared to be picketing the other. Not so obvious because more forcibly concealed were manifestations of social tension in Italy and Germany.

For one who ten years ago had studied in Munich there were missing the little private art schools, the many art students. The University and the Academy appeared as quiet, deserted tombs. New was a Munich turned clothes-conscious for having looked at too many uniforms, and Bavarians shorn of their traditional thriftiness who spend while their money has value, who fulfill under compulsion the Nazi boast of one hundred percent employment . . . *often at starvation wages.*

Nazi party affiliation appears to be good for a secure position irrespective of the individual's aptitude for his job or attitude toward it.

Italy, in preparation for Hitler, was a tragic-comedy. The triumph of Fascism was quite honestly evaluated and characterized by its leaders in the wholesale construction of false facades of plaster painted in skillful imitation of the local travertine, triumphal arches, avenues of bronze pillars on stone bases, all of plaster. Falsification is a motif carried from the diplomatic field into the entire structure of the country. Imitation of one material in another is characteristic of the Fascist regime. Their wearing apparel of materials made from casein and wood-celulose look good until they have become wet, after which they do not so much shrink as warp. It is often a choice of substitutes or nothing. The best goldsmith in Florence is without gold, and the most important photographic concerns without printing paper. But conspicuous over ten years ago in Italy are the healthy looking children, and



Italian young ladies who are dressed and painted like Hollywood queens in place of wearing the solemn black outfits and wans of other times.

American artists appear to have convictions in regard to anti-democratic ideals. In New York work of the group against War and Fascism showed the adverse effect of too much dependence upon theme, with too little use of the formal elements of the picture to express that theme. As a consequence, the idea of war and fascism lost their tragedy, while combinations of form and color were convincingly horrible. It seems self evident that it takes good combinations of color and form to express any idea, with unity letting the observer into the theme where a lack of unity would drive him away.

But confusion of purpose for the artist seems to be an international dilemma. From the Paris show of Three Centuries of Art of the United States and other exhibitions in Europe and New York we find the art of Twentieth Century Europe and America developing out of influences nearest it. As experience increases, the horizon is extended to include sources more remote in time and place. Impressionism gives way to Renaissance influences, Renaissance to Medieval, Greek classic gives way to archaic, to Egyptian; new faucets of expression are sought in primitive art, art of the old Orient. The field is broad and rampant for the impressionable artist with suggestions for ways to go. Through public museum systems and modern reproduction facilities so many influences are at hand that it becomes difficult to maintain a focus on possible results of explorations along so many lines. Only in mural art do the limitations seem sufficiently defined and circumscribed to be an aid to the artist.

Our recent experiences in mural art in America are typical; they show a trend away from the influence of Cezanne toward older methods, materials, and aesthetics than those of the Nineteenth Century. The Cezanne sphere of influence still dominates the gallery picture, but the mural picture is aided little by the deep space and the color orchestration of that great disciple of individualism. When the aesthetics of Cezanne and his followers is abandoned it becomes clearer that their materials are likewise easier to part with, permitting an art without oil paint. Ravages of a bad and impermanent material of expression are already taking toll of the work of Cezanne and his contemporaries. Paintings of three or four centuries ago look newer from a material standpoint.

Mural art of our time seems best when it

## Mural Competition

The Treasury Department, Procurement Division, Washington, D. C., announces a mural competition, open to all artists of California or Nevada. This calls for two murals for the Burbank Post Office, paying \$1,900.00. From the designs in this competition, quality warranting, a commission will become available for a mural in the Lovelock, Nevada Agriculture and Post Office Building. For full competition data, artists must apply to the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Everett C. Maxwell, Foundation of Western Arts, Los Angeles, California. The competition closes February 15, 1939.

Notice of this competition may be found on file in the Museum Library, San Francisco Museum of Art, Page 5, No. 3, of the new Bulletin of the Treasury Department.



most closely approximates the principles which actuated the work of Giotto where the degree of representation is commensurate with the material used, with the artist's personal way of using it, and with the idea employed, so that complete expression of the theme is the result of a balanced emphasis on both abstract organization and ideational factors. There is light, but without shadow; illumination of a surface, not imitation of other surfaces; embellishment of a plane to make it precious through formalizing the elements entered upon it, not dissipation of effect through scientific considerations; materials chosen for the beauty they possess in their own right apart from the beauty of any design to which they may be applied, but with cognizance of their possibilities in that design.

In all good visual art there are variable as well as constant qualities. The constants are the traditional and the variable are the personal qualities. We appear to be emerging from a period in which the personal qualities have been rated more important than the traditional, the great period of expressionist activity. With the widening circle of interest in mural art, artists of the next generation will undoubtedly attach less and less importance to the variables and will put more emphasis on the constants which are the common basis of the fine art of many periods. Then social conflict as a theme will be expressed, not illustratively, but within an organization formal enough to give it dignity, and powerful enough to make it as important in art as it is in life.





Mosaic. *San Francisco Society of Women Artists Exhibition, San Francisco Museum of Art.*  
By EMILIE SIEVERT WEINBERG.

## Juries Chosen for Water Color Show

Juries for the Water Color Annual, to be held January 24 to February 28, 1939, are as follows:

**JURY OF SELECTION:** Jane Berlandina, William Gaskin, William Hesthal, Dong Kingman, Worth Ryder; Gordon Langdon, alternate; Herman Volz, alternate.

**JURY OF AWARDS:** William Gaskin, William Hesthal, Worth Ryder; Dong Kingman, alternate.

An Anne Bremer Memorial Purchase Prize of \$100.00, made possible through the generosity of Albert Bender, will again be awarded this year.



## Exhibitions at Museum

The San Francisco Society of Women Artists is holding its Annual Exhibition of Fine and Decorative Arts at the San Francisco Museum of Art, through December 10th.

## Artist Members Nominated to Board

At a special meeting of the Active Artist Members, San Francisco Art Association, held at the California School of Fine Arts, November 2nd, the following were nominated to represent the artists on the Board of Directors for the coming three years: Mr. Albert M. Bender, who was nominated by acclamation as the unanimous choice of those present; Mr. Worth Ryder, reelected to serve, and Mr. Victor Arnautoff. Their names will be placed on the regular ticket.

A Collection of Paintings by William Keith, early California painter, will be on view at the San Francisco Museum of Art, opening November 11th. This exhibition, assembled by the University of California and the Museum, shows the influence of Keith on the painting of his day, as well as his own development through his long and vigorous life.



## San Francisco Art Association Bulletin

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**T**HE CONTINUED requests from Eastern Art Editors for the use of cuts from the pages of *The Bulletin* is a source of real pride to the Bulletin editors. The Puccinelli Mural which appeared in the September issue is reproduced in this month's Art News (New York).

Nelson Poole's, "The Pointed Arch," printed in our October Bulletin, has also been requested by Art News for inclusion in one of their coming numbers.

To present the work of the Western Artist to the audience across the continent was one of the purposes of the Art Association Bulletin. We look forward to the time when California Painters and Sculptors are as well known to the Eastern Art World as their artists are to us.



### Members' Exhibitions

The Art Association Gallery, at the San Francisco Museum of Art, will show a collection of oils by Hamilton Wolf, November 9th to December 22nd. This exhibition, recently shown at the Gump Galleries, created very favorable comment.

Pastels by Marian Cunningham, and Sculpture by Adeline Kent, will be exhibited in this gallery November 23rd, through December 6th.

An exhibition of drawings by Stafford Duncan will be on view at the San Francisco Museum of Art, opening with a pre-view the evening of November 22nd.



### Alumni Party at Art School

The Alumni Association, California School of Fine Arts, held a reunion to former and present senior students of the school the evening of October 28th. Old friends gathered and contributed to a most successful entertainment.

A Christmas party will be held during December, according to Paul Hunt, president of the Alumni Association.

Further information will be in the mails shortly.

## Excerpt from a Letter to a Young Painter

By MAYNARD DIXON

Dear Lad:

\*\*\* It seems to me you are now at the time (as happens to all of us) when you need some disinterested person to give you hell. As I can neither win nor lose by doing this, though you may stand to win, I hereby elect myself for the job.

But a short time back you were a painter of definite mood and bent, and though a bit theoretical, you showed signs of going somewhere. But now we have to ask: Where?

Your work has now become almost entirely problematical. All the life and conviction have gone out of it and you concern yourself with deadening theory at the expense of your natural power to express. And *to express* implies the deep inner conviction that comes of your own direct perceptions and responses.

The canvas that you sent to — — Exhibition is an example. The idea and underlying structure of the composition are simple and pure; it has remarkable charm of line and spacing — BUT — instead of stating your concept directly and convincingly you fuss around with little corners and angles and prisms, squeezing one small edge against another to throw each into petty relief, all spread in a sticky and hesitating smear of paint that leaves the observer quite in doubt as to your intention. In other words the technique (uncertain and involved) is in direct contradiction of the concept (clear and simple) — and if method is not in line with thought, if it is not in its very nature the expression of the idea, what is it good for?

You must free yourself. Chuck the theory and start putting down your thoughts *as you think them*. \*\*\*



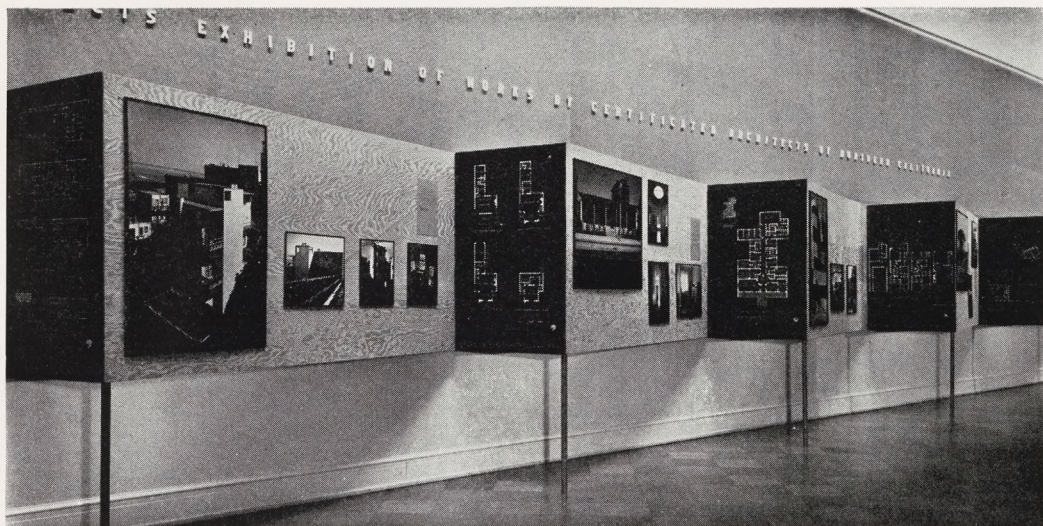
### Montalvo Society Organized

An official announcement of the Montalvo Foundation to residents living in the vicinity of Saratoga was recently made by the Art Association at a buffet luncheon held at Montalvo. Plans for the Montalvo Society and the cultural program of especial interest to that community were outlined.

Architectural plans for fully equipped residence units are now practically complete. Mr. Eldridge Spencer is architect.

Art Association members will please advise the Bulletin in regard to exhibitions of their work.





Part of Recent Exhibition. *American Institute of Architects, Northern California Chapter.*

## Architectural Show Analyzed

By MICHAEL GOODMAN

**M**Y PARTICIPATION as an invited exhibitor as well as the fact that I am writing in retrospect challenges my judicious weighing of an exhibit already gone. When these comments are printed herein, the show of vertiable "portraits" by members of the American Institute of Architects, Northern California District, will be off the walls and returned to gather dust in the various offices of their conception.

According to the opinion of a national magazine which is beginning to sell *Architecture* to the public, American building in general is intraverted. In this case, for once, some architects proposed to have a co-operative show with a touch of collective anonymity; to put up a general topical display of the achievements by the profession in the various fields of design. This resolved itself, however, as if by force of gravity, into the usual individual display, with one exception that no awards were given.

While those who have seen the exhibit carried away a lasting impression of good photography, a future commentator will ponder over the question of whether the houses of the "*California School*," in florescence now, came before good photography, or, if the concurrent school of photography brought about photogenic houses.

The beneficent surroundings in California and the opportunities offered to Architects produce a new idiom of beautiful design in the field of the House for the open country. Such houses predominated the show. Solu-

tions were displayed for individual clients by individual architects, perhaps the best. Unfortunately, their number did not include many others, some of whom may posses the final answer to the secret of the "House," and who practice somewhere unsung and untold.

Group housing was absent, as well as the now faintly pulsating prefabricated houses. Designs for hillside city lots were distinctive, as one would expect on the Pacific slope. The limitations imposed on the architects who design for San Francisco lots are probably responsible for the small number of city residences shown. I wonder if the necessity to stress panoramic cites, in view of equally panoramic rents, may tend to sacrifice some arrangement of the interiors. The newly completed school buildings were very stimulating and remind us of the activity in the Valley towns, where (Attention! Fellow members of the Art Association), some allocations of money trickled their way into mural decorations projects. As a comment on present conditions, lacking in number were commissions of industrial and commercial types of building. Despite the belief that the House of the Future will be a mechanical solution, there was no indication of any emphasis, except in a few instances, on the utilities of the House — I mean bathrooms, kitchens, closet arrangements and such. Perhaps this would have been brought out better under the topical system of exhibiting. I am sure that all my colleagues will join me in expressing an appreciation to Ernest Born, who designed the show and some exhibitors who helped him to put it over.



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## Current Exhibitions in Local Galleries

*Amberg-Hirth*, 165 Post Street: Articles in Metal, by Burke Rummier.

*California Palace of the Legion of Honor*, Lincoln Memorial Park: November 1 through November 30, Exhibition of Work by Contemporary Maryland Artists (Circuited by The Baltimore Museum of Art). Continuing through November 13, Seventeenth International Water Color Exhibition (Circuited by The Chicago Art Institute).

*City of Paris Gallery*, corner Geary and Stockton Streets. General Showing of Prints.

*Courvoisier Galleries*, 133 Geary Street: Opening November 5 and continuing throughout the month, Paintings by Frederick Taubes.

*De Young Memorial Museum*, Golden Gate Park: New Additions to the Exhibition of Photographs of the California Midwinter International Exposition of 1894. Throughout November, Three Centuries of Rare Old European and American Silver.

*Duncan, Vail Company*, 116 Kearny Street. Opening November 9, Linoleum Blocks, by S. Chang. Opening November 23, Wood Cuts, by Charles Surrendorf.

*Gelber, Lilienthal*, 336 Sutter Street: Opening November 15, Duck Etchings, by Roland Park.

November 19, Exhibition of The California Society of Etchers.

*Mills College Art Gallery*, Oakland: October 26-

## Lecture on Printing at Art School

The commercial art classes of the California School of Fine Arts were addressed by Mr. Carroll T. Harris, of the firm of Mackenzie & Harris, Inc., on the subject of printing and printing types and their use in commercial life.

The possibility of listening to authorities on the subjects they are studying is invaluable to the students and Mr. Harris' discussion was well received.



November 30, Drawings by Hokusai and His School.

*Oakland Art Gallery*, Municipal Auditorium, Oakland: November 2-December 4, Annual Exhibition of the Bay Region Art Association.

*San Francisco Museum of Art*, War Memorial, Civic Center: November 5 through December 4, Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of the San Francisco Society of Women Artists. November 11 through December 11, Paintings and Drawings, by William Keith.

*San Francisco Art Association Gallery*: November 9 through November 22, Paintings, by Hamilton A. Wolf. November 23 through December 6, Pastels, by Marion Cunningham, and Sculpture, by Adaline Kent.